

Special Open Door Forum:
Developing Outpatient Therapy Payment Alternatives
Wednesday, August 6, 2008
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EDT
CMS Auditorium

This Special Open Door Forum (ODF) is intended primarily for providers of physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), and speech language pathology (SLP), collectively termed Medicare outpatient therapy, reimbursed under Part B. It may also be of interest to physicians who refer beneficiaries for outpatient therapy. This Special ODF is scheduled to introduce to a broad audience the Developing Outpatient Therapy Payment Alternatives (DOTPA) project with a special emphasis on how data will be collected for this project and how facilities, practices and individual providers may become involved and contribute to this ground-breaking research.

Medicare outpatient therapy services are composed of PT, OT, and SLP reimbursed under Part B. These services account for about three percent of Medicare Part B spending. Attempts to understand past growth in these expenditures led to the realization that CMS cannot adequately assess the appropriateness of utilization patterns or the impact of changes in payment policy without access to better information tied to patient need and the effectiveness of outpatient therapy services.

This five-year project was conceived to address that lack of therapy-related information tied to beneficiary need and the effectiveness of outpatient therapy services. In order to collect the needed data, the project involves (1) the development of a data collection strategy, including creating a patient assessment tool and the recruiting of therapy providers to participate in data collection; (2) analysis of the resulting data to identify payment alternatives to therapy caps; and (3) close engagement with the stakeholder community throughout the project. The ultimate goal is to develop payment method alternatives to the current financial cap on outpatient therapy services.

The contract for implementing this project was awarded on January 29, 2008 to RTI International under the project management of Edward M. Drozd, PhD. In consultation with stakeholders and survey experts, RTI is currently developing a patient assessment tool and recruiting providers for participation in the data collection. After recruiting and training a sample of providers that covers the range of settings where these Medicare Part B therapy services are delivered and the range of beneficiaries eligible for Part B therapy services RTI will begin to collect data using this tool in 2009. You can send comments, including interest in participating, to the project e-mail address (optherapy-comments@rti.org).

To participate (onsite or by telephone) in this Special ODF, please register via the website at <http://registration.intercall.com/go/cms2> . Upon registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing further participation information. The email confirmation will be sent from the "Event Registration" mailbox which is an automated mailbox. Be

sure to watch for this email. The deadline for registration is 2:00 PM EDT, August 4, 2008. Capacity is limited so register early. Registering via the web will ensure we can accommodate as many participants as possible.

An audio recording of this Special Forum will be posted to the Special ODF website at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OpenDoorForums/05_ODF_SpecialODF.asp and will be accessible for downloading beginning August 13, 2008 and available for 30 days.

For automatic emails of Open Door Forum schedule updates (E-Mailing list subscriptions) and to view Frequently Asked Questions please visit our website at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OpenDoorForums/>

We look forward to your participation.